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PARENTAL
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Influence of Religious Parents.



INFLUENCE
OF
RELIGIOUS PARENTS,
ILLUSTRATED BY
INTERESTING FACTS,

Selected from different authors.

BY A FATHER.

REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.



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INTRODUCTION.

It is a fact, which ought to thrill the heart of every parent, that the eternal destiny of his children, is in a great measure committed into his hands. God has said "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." And to the parent who neglects his duty, he says, "seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy *children*." Can any parent who is familiar with these truths, be unfaithful to the young immortals committed to his care? It would seem impossible. But what do facts teach us on this subject? Parents generally suffer their children to grow up untaught and ungoverned, as though the Bible revealed nothing in respect either to their influence, or obligations. There are however happy exceptions. Some parents are found in every age of the world who, believing in the promises of God,

train up their children for his service here, and consequently for glory beyond the grave. And many more doubtless who are familiar with the promises, did they but *realize* their truth from day to day, would be untiring in their efforts to secure the future well being of those entrusted to their care. As *facts*, illustrating and verifying the promises of God, afford the most powerful arguments to influence the minds of such parents, the few contained in the following pages, have been selected, and are recommended to them for their perusal. It is believed that no one can read them attentively and reflect upon them with seriousness and candor, and still doubt whether the inspirer of sacred truth is what he has promised to be—a God to the *faithful* and to their *seed* after them.

That these facts may serve to confirm the faith of parents in the promises of God, and excite them to unwearied efforts and prayers in behalf of their children, is the most earnest desire of the

COMPILER.

INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS PARENTS.

HANNAH AND SAMUEL.

The history of Samuel is one replete with interest and instruction. In whatever light we view him, as a Christian, a minister, or a statesman ; whether in childhood, manhood or old age, he is alike the object of our veneration and love. At a very early age, just after he was weaned, he was carried by his pious parents to the house of God in Shiloh, and there left to minister as an assistant to Eli the priest, according to his mother's vow when she asked him of the Lord. Very soon after this, and while yet a child, he was consecrated, and became a prophet of the Lord. "And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be

a prophet of the Lord." Besides attending to the spiritual concerns of the kingdom, as the prophet of the Lord, it is said that he judged Israel all the days of his life. And as a judge, his character for uprightness and integrity was without reproach. Few public officers can say as this man of God, at the close of his life. "Behold now I am old and grey headed ; and behold my sons are with you, and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold here I am. Witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed ; whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whom have I received any bribe, to blind my eyes therewith ? and I will restore it. And they said thou hast not defrauded nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand." Thus in every relation of life, we find this man alike distinguished for his eminent piety and unimpeachable morals.

In considering the character of this wonderful man, we are naturally led to inquire into the causes which combined to produce it. In this investigation we shall be able, I trust, to arrive at some degree of certainty. And happy shall

I be if I can throw such light upon the subject, as shall, by the Divine blessing, be the means of giving to the church and to the world more such men as Samuel.

If I mistake not, I think I can distinctly trace to his pious Mother, under God, the origin of all his goodness and all his greatness. Let me call your attention to the following facts.

God created Samuel in answer to the prayer of his pious Mother. We read that for years after her marriage with Elkanah, she was childless ; that she, with her husband, went up on a certain festival occasion, to worship the Lord in Shiloh, and that here, after the sacrifice was offered, she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow and said, " Oh Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of thine handmaid and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a child, then will I give him unto the Lord, all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."

The Lord answered her prayer, and she called the child Samuel, which means, asked of the Lord. Here we find the first intimations of the

future greatness and goodness of this wonderful man. He had a mother of such eminent piety, that she could move God, to put forth his creative energies, and give to the church and to the world a man, a saint, a prophet, and a judge. It was for this her holy soul wanted to be a mother. Not merely that she might feel the thrilling gladness of a mother's heart, but that she might have a child to give to God.

Well were it for the church and for the world, if every Christian Mother could, with equal propriety, call her child Samuel—asked of the Lord. Well too were it for the church and the world were there more Hannahs.

Then would the bitterness of the curse, which rested upon woman at the fall, be removed, and the terror which now agitates her, be allayed, by the prospect of giving to the world one who would bless it.

Samuel's mother with great self-denial and sacrifice, fulfilled her vow. When she had weaned him, she brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh. "And they slew a bullock and brought him to Eli. And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood before thee here praying unto

the Lord. For this child I prayed ; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore also have I lent him to the Lord ; as long as he liveth shall he be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there." The parents then returned home, and the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest. How does this self-denying act of Hannah show the vigor of her piety? Here she leaves her little son at an age when most he needed a mother's care, and when most he was entwined around a mother's heart. She leaves him never to claim him again. Methinks that blow which sundered him from her arms, and separated her from his sweet infant loveliness, must have almost sundered the strings of life. As she turned away from Shiloh, to her home, how must the mother's heart have bled, and a flood of tears dimmed her eye, as she imprinted the last kiss upon his infant cheek, and resigned him to God forever. She left him to see him but once a year, and then only to renew her weeping and her dedication.

How touching the short note of her annual visit to Shiloh. " But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child girded with a linen

ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice." In these two facts, of the birth and dedication of Samuel by his mother, we have the most undoubted evidence of *her* eminent piety, and the most undoubted origin of *his*.

Very little is said of her husband, although enough to lead us to believe, that he too was a good man. But the word of God has thrown upon the sacred page a flood of light, as it regards Hannah, and perhaps for this very reason to show us how much the future destinies of the child are involved in those of the mother.

How few mothers are there at the present day, who make such an unconditional surrender of their children to God, when they pray for their existence, or their salvation. How few are there who feel, when converted, that they belong to God. 'The glory of God seems not to be their object when they pray.

Having thus briefly traced the origin of the eminent piety and usefulness of Samuel, I proceed to show, from the subsequent history of the church, that similar results may ordinarily be

expected, from similar parental piety. Of course, in the investigation little can be said about the exercises of godly mothers, prior to the birth of their offspring—as these are among the secret and sacred things which rarely find their way beyond the retirement of the closet. We may however take it for granted, that when the mother has subsequently displayed the spirit of Hannah, she might with equal propriety have named her child Samuel. * * * * *

The biographer of that excellent man, Dr. Doddridge, who wrote a commentary on the New Testament, the Rise and Progress, &c. which have been so useful, says, “I have heard him relate that his mother taught him the history of the Old and New Testament, before he could read, by the assistance of some Dutch tiles in the chimney of the room where they commonly sat, and her wise and pious reflections upon the stories, were the means of making some good impressions upon his heart, which were never worn out. And therefore this method of instruction he frequently recommended to parents.”

The biographer of that eminent Christian and minister, Dr. Payson, thus writes—“To the

Christian fidelity of his parents there is the fullest testimony in the subsequent and repeated acknowledgment of their son, who habitually attributed his religious hopes, as well as his usefulness in life, under God, to their instruction, example, and prayer; *especially to those of his mother.*"

She appears to have admitted him to the most intimate, unreserved and confiding intercourse, which was yet so wisely conducted, as to strengthen, rather than diminish, his filial reverence. His recollection of her, extended back to very early childhood, and he has been heard to say, that she was very solicitous that he might be liberally educated, and receive every accomplishment which would increase his respectability and usefulness in the world: the supreme, all absorbing concern of her soul respecting him was, that he might become a child of God. This manifested itself in her counsels, expostulations and prayers, which were followed up with a perseverance that nothing could check. And they were not in vain. He was often known to weep under the preaching of the gospel, when only three years old. About this period too, he would frequently call his

mother to his bedside to converse on religion, and to answer numerous questions, respecting his relation to God and the future world. His mother believed that he was converted in childhood.

Samuel J. Mills, the father of the A. B. C. F. M., himself a man of eminent piety and a missionary, had such a mother. His biographer writes thus—"Could we without sacrilege, enter the sanctuary of a mother's bosom, we might whisper a tale, that would account for the distinguished usefulness with which God has condescended to favor some of the best of men. Many a godly mother can say, I had peculiar solicitude concerning *this* child. Even before its birth I dedicated it to the Lord, and then engaged that it should be unreservedly devoted to his glory. And when the little immortal was committed to my arms, with many prayers and tears did I renew the engagement, till it was strongly impressed upon my mind that God had heard my cry and accepted my offering. This is something more than fiction in relation to Mr. Mills. It is almost impossible to read the memoir of any minister eminent for piety, without observing that his earliest religious impres-

sions had their source in the instruction and prayers of a pious mother."

I have in my possession facts, which go to prove that when mothers have, like Samuel's, consecrated their children to the special service of God in the ministry, or as missionaries, he has not disappointed their hopes. During a recent journey, I was introduced to a lady, remarkable in the village where she lived, for piety. She had a son whom she dedicated to God, to be his minister; and with this in view she educated him.

He passed through college, unconverted. Having finished his college course, she sent him to a theological seminary, determined to give him an education, which, if he was converted, would fit him for the ministry—and thus to do all *she* could to qualify him for the office to which she had devoted him. He became eminently pious, and is now in the far west, one of the most eminently useful missionaries of the Home Missionary Society.

From a letter received by a young lady, in one of the villages I visited, and who has since gone on a mission, I was permitted to make the following extract. It was from a pious mother

in Massachusetts. "But to the missionaries of the Cross, I feel a twofold tie, not easily broken. About twenty four years ago, I had my heart touched, and my zeal kindled to a flame, that has never yet been extinguished, by reading of the trials and labors, the patient endurance of Carey and his associates. Oh how I longed to be a missionary. How I longed to do something for the heathen. I asked the Lord in all the fervency and sincerity of my heart, 'What wilt thou have me to do.' The Lord whispered by his word and by his Spirit, 'Thou dost well in that it was in thine heart to build me a house, nevertheless thou shalt not build the house, but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house to my name. Train up children, to bear my name among the Gentiles, and make up thy lack of duty towards me.' Immediately, I conferred not with flesh and blood, but fully, freely, and deliberately consecrated my infant to the Lord. How often I knelt by the cradle and told my Savior she was all his own. And when I had a son, a Samuel, entrusted to my arms, I made a full and free consecration of him to Christ, to labor among the heathen. That son has as fully

and as freely given himself to the same work, though utterly ignorant of my feelings on the subject at the time. God added another, and yet another daughter, to my little family, and they too are the Lord's, when and to what place he points out to them duty."

In one of the villages of Vermont, lived a pious mother, whose heart was greatly affected in behalf of the heathen, by reading the life of the missionary Harriet Newell. She was poor, and had neither gold nor silver to pour into the treasury of the Lord. In her distress because she had nothing to give, it was deeply impressed upon her mind, that she had children whom she might devote to God, to carry the Gospel to the dying heathen. She immediately retired to her closet to pour out her soul in prayer, and to entreat the Lord to prepare and send her children into the missionary field. And what think you was the result? Already one son and two daughters are missionaries among the heathen, and another son is now longing to go, and is only detained by providential circumstances.

The mother of President Davies was a woman of eminent piety, and of very superior

natural powers of mind ; and the distinguished piety and usefulness of her son, is one among the many instances which have occurred where the prayers and example of a pious mother have been signally blessed.

He was an only son. By maternal feelings and vows he had been devoted to God ; and the name *Samuel* was given to him by his mother, as an expression of the same feelings which had led to the bestowment of the name on the distinguished prophet. 1 Sam. 1 : 11. He remained with his parents until he was about ten years of age, and was taught by his mother, there being no school in the vicinity. His progress in these early years is spoken of as such as to attract attention, and as indicating uncommon promise. During this period of his life, it is not known that he had any impressions of special seriousness. He is described as a boy of uncommon sprightliness ; as demeaning himself with propriety, and as making rapid progress in his studies.

At about ten years of age, he was sent to an English school at some distance from his father's, where he continued two years, and made great progress in learning. Away from his fa-

ther's home, however, and lacking the counsel and example of his pious parents, his mind became more careless on the subject of religion. Yet he was then in the habit of secret prayer, particularly in the evening. The reason why he did this, as he stated in his diary, was that "he feared lest he should perhaps die before morning." It is remarkable, also, in his prayers at that time that "he was more ardent in his supplications for being introduced into the gospel ministry, than for any other thing."

The first twelve years of his life, however, he afterwards regarded as having been wasted in the most entire negligence of God and religion. At about this period of his life, it is probable, he was brought to see his need of a Savior, and to devote himself to the service of that God to whom he had been consecrated by the vows and prayers of his mother. Of the exercises of his mind at that time, little is now known. The influence of his mother's example and prayers, and of the fact that he had been early devoted by her to God, is known to have produced a deep impression on his own mind. In a letter addressed by him many years after to a friend in London, he says, "That he was blessed with

a mother whom he might account, without filial vanity or partiality, one of the most eminent saints he ever knew upon earth. And here," says he, "I cannot but mention to my friend an anecdote known but to few, that is, that I am a son of prayer, like my namesake Samuel, the prophet ; and my mother called me Samuel, because, she said, ' I have asked him of the Lord.' This early dedication to God has always been a strong inducement to me to devote myself to him as a personal act ; and the most important blessings of my life I have looked upon as immediate answers to the prayers of a pious mother."

DEEP CONCERN FOR MY CHILDREN.

IN the interior of Massachusetts, in a quiet country village, a pious father was training a family of children for immortality. When first a father he had been but slightly impressed with the solemn responsibility which that relation imposed. He had received the trust of a young immortal ; another had been added to his charge, and still a third ; but the thought had seldom,

perhaps never, possessed his mind, that these souls were committed to his keeping as the jewels of a king, who would one day want them to set in his own crown—a diadem of stars.

He was blessed with the good things of this life, and yet free from the incumbrance of too much wealth. Without the care which poverty brings, he was also not in the snare of riches, and might therefore have set his heart upon the spiritual welfare of his children. But contented with the ordinary duties of a parent; praying daily with his family and leading them on the Sabbath to the house of God; requiring them strictly to observe the Lord's day, and forbidding them to profane His name, he manifested but little solicitude for their eternal welfare.

An incident occurred which the Spirit of God sent home with power to his heart. In the neighborhood, the son of one who had long lived by his side, and whose views of parental duty were similar to his own, was suddenly called into eternity. No time for preparation was granted him; the sunny season of his youth had been spent in carelessness and sin, and the night of a hopeless death had come upon the morning of a misspent life. Parental fondness could find in

his experience no ground of hope. The notes of the funeral bell thrilled every heart with the thought of NO HOPE. The sinking coffin gave back from the hollow grave, the same sad words, NO HOPE. And when the neighbors that met at this burial had returned home, and the father of whom we first spoke, called his little ones around him for evening worship, his oldest son asked him if he thought the boy whom they had seen laid in the grave that day, had gone to Heaven? The answer must be given, and he knew there was no reason even for hope. He said he was afraid not. And then he thought, if this boy, who has been the companion of my child from infancy, and who has been as well instructed as mine in the things that belong to their everlasting peace, has perished in his sins, why may not mine perish also? The thought was terrible. He felt the tide of a father's love swelling in his heart; the fountains of his deep affections were stirred, and with tears he exclaimed, "I AM AFRAID MY CHILDREN WILL BE LOST!"

Nor was this the mere impulse of parental solicitude. The Spirit of God had seized on this event and awakened these thoughts, and

sealed them with his signal power. The father, under the influence of this sanctified emotion, knelt with his children around the family altar, and there on that evening, consecrated his family to God, and before Him and them, promised to bear in mind that they were candidates for heaven or hell.

Now, he entered upon a solemn and systematic effort to promote their salvation. It was a heaven-directed impulse that moved him to this fresh consecration of himself and his to God. From the Word of Life he sought divine direction, and with more fervent and more persevering prayer than he had ever offered, he sought the Holy Spirit's aid.

The strong anxiety that possessed his heart, discovered itself in his daily walk and conversation. His wife, with him, was excited to a livelier sense of her obligations, and to quickened resolutions to engage with her husband in this holy work. Together they labored and prayed ; and by the power of a more consistent example, and with more faithful instruction, they strove to bring their offspring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Their children felt the force even of silent preaching.

They saw the change ; they asked among themselves the cause, and answered their own questions ; for each young heart was already impressed with the truth that not for themselves but for their CHILDREN, their parents were concerned.

The means these pious parents employed were very simple, but they were used with diligence and with faith. As they read the Word of God, they were surprised to find how many and how strong were the promises for the encouragement of those who train their children in the fear of the Lord. These promises, of which the Bible now seemed to be full, were precious to their hearts. They loved them, and loved to believe them. Believing the promises, it was sweet to obey the commands. Obeying from love, and working by faith, they soon discovered the fruits of their labors in the seriousness of their children.

One morning about daylight, the oldest son, about fifteen years of age, tapped gently at his father's chamber door, and being bid to enter, came to the bed-side, and burying his face in the clothes, wept as if his heart was bursting. His parents were much alarmed, and anxiously inquired for the cause of his distress. "Oh,"

said he, "I AM AFRAID I SHALL LOSE MY SOUL!"

That was a moment of intense and solemn interest with those fond parents. The sensation was new and tender, and it is not to be wondered at, that they wept freely before they could raise their voices even to pray. They then learned from their child, that for sometime past he had been unusually impressed with the importance of seeking an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that on the evening previous, which had been a Sabbath evening, the earnest instruction of his father had reached his heart; he could not sleep through the night, for he was afraid he should die in his sins. He had been trying to pray, but could not, and now he wanted his father to pray for him, and his mother too, for he thought he should lose his soul unless God would have mercy on him.

There was a solemn prayer-meeting in that chamber on that morning, which those parents will remember in eternity. They wrestled with God, and with the fervor of parental tenderness, yearning over a son who felt that he was perishing, they asked their Father to save their child. He who hears his children when they cry, was listening to those prayers, and treasuring those

tears. An answer of mercy was sent; and not many days after, those parents were permitted to embrace a son—a first-born son—"born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God!"

A new era dawned upon that family. Pious resolutions and faithful obedience had been blessed to the conversion of one child; a subduing influence had been excited on the hearts of others; strong encouragement was added to former faith, and grateful joy diffused over a circle in which the Spirit of God delighted to dwell. This was the beginning of a series of conversions, the particulars of which, it is not important that we should relate. Since, years have passed away, and the first-born is now a minister of the New Testament, preaching salvation to a lost world; the second is the devoted wife of another, and the third is useful in his sphere as an humble follower of the Savior.

We are aware that there is nothing striking or extraordinary in this narrative. Had there been, we would not have recorded it. The object we have in view is to show that the promises of God to faithful parents, do not depend on eminent abilities, or remarkable circumstances; but that the diligent use of means, with

humble reliance on the Holy Spirit, will secure the salvation of our children. "It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The humblest cottager, who has a Bible and a Savior, may take those promises, and with his children, approach that Savior, saying, "Here, Lord, am I and the children whom thou hast given me. Take them for thine own, and fit them for thy service here, and to shine in thy crown above the brightness of the sun forever." And the Savior will hear. Not many children of the rich or the noble, not many children of the distinguished in the church may be called; but the retired disciple, whose family is his world, and whose heart vibrates continually between home and heaven, may claim the promises, and in answer to his prayers, if accompanied with the faithful use of means, he may see his children yielding their hearts to God in the morning of their days.

LITTLE ELLEN.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

ELLEN F—— L—— was born at Hartford, Conn., on the 21st of April, 1823. She was the youngest but one of a family of nine children, and carefully trained up by pious parents. Her infancy was feeble and delicate; and she received, in consequence, more than the usual share of indulgence. Her mother had adopted the principle, that submission to parental authority should be established before the completion of the first twelve months. But in the case of little Ellen the subjugating process had been longer deferred. So, when it commenced, it was of course more difficult. She had become strongly addicted to the love of her own way, and displayed great perseverance in the points she resolved to carry. After repeated and severe trials, it was found that her will was more readily subdued by an assurance of God's displeasure than by any personal suffering.

On account of the precarious health of the mother, and her necessary attentions to a younger infant, the eldest sister assumed the care of lit-

tle Ellen. She was committed to her, and received as a sacred gift, and a precious proof of maternal confidence. She became an inmate of her chamber, reposed upon her pillow, brought her little joys or sorrows for sympathy, and was the object of the most faithful, affectionate instructions. Habits of stated prayer, and of frequent conversation on serious subjects, were thus established, and the sisterly influence was visibly blessed to the good of her soul. * * *

* * * * * She particularly delighted in conversation on religious subjects. She came with many questions to her eldest sister, who felt it a privilege to impart to her, in such fragments as were adapted to her unfolding intellect, a knowledge of the things that accompany salvation. She often made inquiries about the nature of baptism, of the ceremonies connected with the interment of the dead, and, in the simplicity of her heart, wondered who would take care of the last man who should be left upon the earth. One of these conversations, which occurred on the Sabbath, when she was about five years old, was so replete with solemn and tender emotion, as to be circumstantially remembered. It was on the nature of repentance ; and

her eldest sister labored to give her that view of its necessity which the Holy Scriptures enforce. She seemed to receive a new and strong impression that "all had sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "Must we all die for ever, sister?—must we all die for ever?" was her anxious inquiry. She was answered that Christ, the Redeemer, had come down upon earth, and borne the penalty. "Shall we all be saved, then?" was her question. The conditions were unfolded to her, and her reply was as from the depths of an overflowing heart, "I do repent. I do love Jesus Christ. I believe in him. I will obey his word." After the public worship of that day, when the Bible was read in the family circle, she was observed to listen with the deepest attention. But when her turn to read came, her lips trembled, and after one or two ineffectual efforts, she burst into tears. Her mother led her into her own room, and taking her into her lap, inquired the cause of her sorrow. And a hope, mingled with awe, stole over her own soul, that the Holy Spirit might indeed be operating on the heart of her child, when she heard her exclaim, "Mother, mother, I cannot tell. My heart is so full, that I cannot speak my words."

It was observed by all around, that she acted more constantly under the control of religious principle; and that this change in her feelings and character gradually became permanent. Not only by the family, but by the school instructress it was remarked that she "must have grace in her heart." So predominant were these dispositions which by nature she did not possess. She seemed filled with love for every creature, and was ready to give up her own pleasure or comfort for the gratification of others. Her pity for the poor shewed itself in forms, very uncommon for so young a child. Her desire for usefulness became a prevalent motive, continually stimulating her to exertion. She would encounter any fatigue, and submit to any privation, if an affirmative answer was given to her question, "will it make me more *useful*?" Thus she was induced to keep in order every thing committed to her care. Her shawl was nicely folded and laid with her bonnet and gloves, in their proper place, as soon as she came from school. The very last night of her life, each garment was nicely arranged and deposited by her own hands, as usual, for she did not desire any one to perform these offices for her; but was anxious to do every

thing in her power, both for herself and others.

She early formed habits of secret prayer, besides her regular devotions at rising and retiring. This was first discovered by her mother, who one day in entering her own bedroom found Ellen there, who suddenly changed her attitude, with an appearance of confusion. To the inquiry, what she was doing there, she modestly replied, "I do not like to tell, mother."

"But children who do not like to tell what they are doing, are in great danger of doing something they are ashamed of. I hope it is not so with you."

Grieved at such a suspicion, she closed her eyes and said, in a gentle whisper, "O no, mother, I was only going to pray a little while."

One evening her mother entered her chamber, and supposing her to be asleep, knelt by her bedside, and poured forth a supplication for her child. When she arose, she observed the hands of her little one to be raised and clasped, while the sweet words, "thank you, mother," proved that she had been a listener.

Her reliance on prayer, in all her little troubles, was sincere and affecting. Once, when she had some visitants of her own age, the youngest

sister of one of them was troublesome and refractory. After various attempts to make her quiet and happy, Ellen disappeared. She was at length found in an empty parlor, kneeling by a low footstool. "Why have you left your play-mates?" said her mother. "Oh, that little girl did behave *so bad*, that I thought I must go and pray for her."

It is not pretended that little Ellen, though so remarkable a child, was free from faults; or that the grace of God, which brought forth such rare and lovely fruits, entirely eradicated the infirmities of fallen nature. Her mother had adopted the excellent practice, too much neglected by parents, of counting the teachers of her children as friends, and treating them with attention and confidence. This mutual understanding, by transmitting to each other new traits, or occasional variations of character, as they unfolded, set a double watch over the pupil, and was a powerful aid in promoting the great objects of mental and moral improvement. In consequence of this free intercourse, the mother of little Ellen received information of a fault, which she and one of her intimate friends had committed. She imparted to her, in the morning, her

knowledge of the offence, (which had however been committed sometime before,) and calmly desired her to retire to her chamber, and meditate in solitude upon her improper conduct. At noon she carried her a slice of bread and a glass of water, and spread her little table for her. No such punishment had ever been inflicted on her before; and she was distressed, and seemed to think it greater than the nature of the fault deserved. But she sat down quietly to her sad and lone repast. In the course of the afternoon, the mother repeated her visit. The little prisoner received her at the door, in the most humble and affectionate manner.

“ Oh, mother, can't you forgive me ? God has forgiven me. Can't *you* forgive me ? ”

“ Why do you think, my child, that God has forgiven you ? ”

“ Because I have prayed to him. I have prayed to him, and I *know he has forgiven me.* ”

The mother took her from her confinement ; and in restoring her to favor told her that she must solicit the pardon of her instructress, at school, the next morning, with which condition she faithfully complied. One morning her father said to her, “ if your mother will permit, you

may go to Mr. H——'s store and purchase a Bible for me." She accordingly went; and when it was brought to him he said, "I think I shall give you this book, my daughter." She instantly made a grateful curt'sy, her eyes brightening with delight, and said, "O thank you, dear father;—

"This *is* a precious book indeed,—
Happy the child who learns to read,—
'Tis God's own word, that he hath given,
To show our souls the way to heaven."

Adding with vivacity, "and I will read it through." In conformity with this promise, she would be found perusing its sacred pages very early in the morning, for she was habitually an early riser.

Such pleasure did she derive from this employment, that she was anxious to have her little brother partake in it. When her mother came down in the morning, she often found that she had been some-time dressed, and was seated with her arm round his neck, earnestly and patiently teaching him to pronounce the words of her beloved book.

She anticipated with much pleasure the quarterly meetings of the Maternal Association, and

profited by the instructions which she received there. She attended devoutly to the prayers, and was happy to unite her voice in a hymn of praise, which was selected for the assembled children.

But especially was her attachment ardent to the Sabbath school. The appointed lessons were diligently studied, and through the week she looked forward with delight to the instructions she was accustomed there to enjoy. One Saturday evening there was a fire in the immediate vicinity of her father's house. She was much distressed in watching the progress of the conflagration, lest the little children belonging to the unfortunate family should suffer. In being assured by her eldest sisters, who went to visit them, that they were not hurt, but were quite happy, (it being only a barn, that was consumed)—she became composed, and retired to rest. There were however, in the course of the night, two other fires, so that she became exceedingly alarmed, and the heavy ringing of bells in the neighborhood, added to the loud cries in the streets, and the glare of the flames, wrought painfully upon her nervous system. The usual means to soothe her, seemed to fail. At length,

her eldest sister told her, that the indulgence of such fears would impair her usefulness, and mentioned the instance of a lady whom she had seen, who when a fire was in her own premises, and her services were needed, was wholly unable to help, and occupied the time and thoughts of others, in taking care of her. It was affecting to see how her strong love of usefulness strove against the terrors that were upon her, and how with trembling lips she said, "I must try to be calm, or else sister says, I shall be less useful." In the dim light of the next morning she stood by her mother's bedside.

"Oh, mother! I have been *so* troubled, for fear that I should not be well enough to go to the Sabbath school. I have hardly slept all night; and have counted the clock every time, only when it struck five."

She was, however, able to go, and enjoyed the exercises as much as usual. She was particularly interested in the sermon of her pastor, the Rev. Mr. S——. The subject was Family Government, and it was founded on that passage in Judges, "How shall we order the child? and how shall we do unto him?" She conversed much about the text, and different parts of the

discourse, especially about the sons of Eli, who were deprived of the benefits of judicious parental discipline. In the course of the evening, she asked her sister, if it was her opinion that we should know each other in heaven. "And what will the deaf and dumb do?" said she. "Will they speak then like us? will they sing there, as we shall? that is, if we are ever permitted to go to heaven."

How little was it imagined by the affectionate group that surrounded her, that the next Sabbath was to be her last on earth. In the course of the ensuing week, she appeared to have a slight cold, but made no complaint, and daily attended school. On Saturday noon she came home, and entering the room with her accustomed curt'sy, said, in a cheerful voice, "Mother, I have learned every word of my Sabbath school lessons. May I invite a few little girls to spend the afternoon with me?" She mentioned the names of those whom she had selected, and was indulged in her request. They came, and the time passed pleasantly together. When they took leave, which was before sunset, she asked permission to attend her favorite friend and neighbor home, and remain half an

hour. The mother of that chosen friend, in recurring, after her death, to every little circumstance of this her parting visit, remembers that she requested to be informed the moment when her half hour should expire, that she might promptly obey her mother by a punctual return. As she was tying her bonnet for her, she looked up with a sweet smile, and inquired, "Did you not know that there was a prayer meeting this afternoon at our minister's house?—Yes, there was, and my mother went." The words of the little monitor, though not intended to convey a reproof of forgetfulness, were tenderly treasured up. The next day, while returning from church, as if some presentiment rested on her mind, she said to the same dear little friend, with whom she was walking homeward,—

"Maria, to-morrow you may have all my playthings. I shall not want them any more."

After they separated, it was observed that she lingered upon the steps, fondly looking after this chosen and loved companion,—her last farewell. The evening was spent seriously, but pleasantly, in the domestic circle. Her parents had gone to attend a meeting, and the eldest sister gathered around her the younger children, su-

perintending them, and promoting such conversation and reading as were consistent with the duties of that sacred season. Finding herself much fatigued with the duties of her Sabbath school class, which she had walked a considerable distance to instruct, she proposed to retire early, and little Ellen rose to accompany her. Being accustomed to bid good-night, and make her curt'sy, she did so, though none were present but children. It was observed that she said, in the sweetest tone, and more than once, "Good-night, my dear brothers; a *kind good-night*." It was her last good-night on earth. We trust she is now where the shadows of night shall fall no more for ever.

She said her prayers, and conversed with her sister on religious subjects, especially inquiring about that most solemn religious rite, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Her mother, after returning home, hearing her cough in an unusual manner, went to her chamber and gave her an appropriate medicine, which she left by the bedside, to be repeated if necessary. Before midnight she awoke and coughed again. Her eldest sister, while tenderly administering to her comfort, discovered that she was convulsed, and

felt her head droop upon her shoulder. Supposing that she had fainted, she carried her to the room of her parents, and laid her in her father's arms, while she sought remedies as for a fainting child, which were instantly administered. Medical aid was summoned without delay ; but all was too late. There was neither gasp nor sigh.

“ The life had gone,—the breath had fled ;
And what had been no more must be :
The lovely form, the welcome tread,
Ah! where were they? and where was she?”

Faith answers, “ It is well with the child.” For surely “ of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Thus died the dear child of whom this imperfect sketch is given, on the 8th of November, 1830, at the age of seven years. A post mortem examination decided the fatal disease to have been a malformation of the heart.

And were we to inquire what called forth such early loveliness and piety, *in a character which at first developed tendencies of a different order*, the reply would be, that next to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, next to parental disci-

pline and prayer, was the tender, faithful, and hallowed influence of the ELDEST SISTER. *

John Randolph, of Roanoke, whose brilliant talents and stirring eloquence illumined our legislative halls for years, said that he would have been a French infidel, if his mother had not taken his hands in hers, when he was a child, and taught him to say, "Our Father who art in heaven." The great mental power, erudition and moral worth of the Wesley family are to be at-

* Though much is here attributed to the influence of the Eldest Sister, yet when it is remembered, that she assumed the responsibilities, and discharged the duties of a *Mother*, this interesting narrative will not be considered out of place in this connection. It appears, however, that the mother of little Ellen, although she had committed her to the care of the eldest sister, did not by any means neglect the discipline or instruction of her child : and could the history of this eldest sister be given, it would be seen that the "tender, faithful and hallowed influence" she was enabled to exert, was owing to kindred influences which she herself had received from her *mother*.

tributed, in a great measure, to the superior talents, sound judgment, and admirable family government of Mrs. Wesley. The mother of Robert Hall, the eloquent preacher, is said to have been "a woman of sterling sense, and distinguished piety." Timothy Dwight and Aaron Burr were first cousins. Their mothers were daughters of the elder Jonathan Edwards. Both of these mothers were devoted Christians, and both consecrated their infant sons on the altar of prayer.

The mother of the former lived to instil into the heart of her son the principles of piety, and to see the fruit of her efforts in his profound learning, ardent piety, and extensive usefulness. The mother and the father of the latter both died while he was an infant. If Burr had been blest with the moral training and pious example of his mother, he might have been as eminent for religious principle, deep devotion, and extensive usefulness, as he was infamous for political dissimulation and profligate habits.

Bishop Hall, who flourished in the first half of the seventeenth century, a man of strong intellect, and of eminent piety and usefulness, thus briefly describes the course and fidelity of

his mother: "How often have I blessed the memory of those divine pages which I have heard from her mouth! What day did she pass, without being much engaged in private devotion! Never have any lips read to me such feeling lectures of piety."

Almost every body has read some of the writings of *Richard Baxter*. They have doubtless been instrumental in conducting a great multitude of souls to the cross and to heaven. It was his father's faithful conversation with him respecting the life to come, in connection with his holy example in his family, and his meekness under reproach, that first awakened Baxter to serious consideration, and led him in early life to choose the service of God.

The *Rev. John Flavel* died in 1601. His works still live, rich in thought, luminous in instruction, deep in the spirit of piety, and will long continue to live, to guide and bless the world. He says, "I bless God for a religious, tender father, who often poured out his soul to God for me; and this stock of prayers I esteem above the fairest inheritance on earth."

The parents of *John Mooney Mead* inform us, that in the measures they took with their son,

they regarded him from the first as an immortal being whom they were to educate for eternity. With special solicitude and effort they sought his *early conversion* to God : at about a year old, commenced praying with him on retiring to bed, and at other times—taught him to pray for himself, and what it was to pray with the heart—imparted to him religious knowledge at the earliest dawn of intellect, by teaching him hymns and portions of Scripture, accompanied with simple explanations—took special pains to cultivate his benevolent affections, by encouraging him to do good to others—never incited him by emulation and the spirit of rivalry—early and invariably taught him to subject his own will to that of his parents—never deceived him, always endeavored in all things, in promises and threatenings, to keep exact and literal truth with him—encouraged all his inquiries after knowledge by satisfying him when they could—gave him the reason of things as far as they were capable—talked with him in correct, manly language and pronunciation, never in baby terms—treated him, in short, as a rational being, with uniform and manifest affection, so as to make the impression on his mind, that in all they did,

commanded, or prohibited, they sought his real happiness, his highest good. These means and efforts were made successful. He gave early evidence that he loved the Savior; and at less than five years of age, died in the bright hope of a blessed immortality.

The agency exercised by the mother of *Washington*, in forming that character which the world delighted to honor, is a subject of elevating contemplation. His undeviating integrity and unshaken self-command, were developments of her own elements of character, fruits from those germs which she planted in the soil of his infancy. She combined the Spartan firmness and simplicity, with the deep affections of a Christian matron, and all this concentrated influence was brought to bear upon her son, who by the early death of his father, passed more entirely under her discipline. He, who has been likened to Fabius, to Cincinnatus, and to other heroes of antiquity, only to show how he transcended each by the consistency of a Christian, he who caused the shades of Mount Vernon to be as sacred to the patriot as the shrine at Mecca to the pilgrim, shares his glory with her who wrought among the rudiments of

his being, with no idle or uncertain hand. The monument which now designates her last repose, speaks eloquently to her sex, bidding them to impress the character of true greatness upon the next generation. It warns them to prepare by unslumbering efforts, for their own solemn responsibility. Let her who is disposed to indulge in lassitude, or to forget that she may stamp an indelible character either for good, or evil, on the immortal mind submitted to her regency, go, and renounce her errors and deepen her energies and relumine her hopes, at the tomb of "Mary, the mother of Washington."

"Soon after the installation of a Pastor," says a Home Missionary, "and a revival of religion which followed it, a 'donation party' was assembled at the home of the Minister. It was composed of sixteen heads of families, gathered from England, Scotland, Ireland, New England and New York. They were all, including some who had recently been propounded for admission, professors of religion. Upon enquiring, the following facts were ascertained; that *all* their parents, but one, were members of the church of Christ; that *ninety-two* to *nine* of their adult

brothers and sisters are also members of the church militant or triumphant; and that *all* their *children* over eleven years of age (and some we hope under) had been hopefully brought into the fold in the recent revival."

Some years ago it was ascertained that in the Seminary at Andover, there were *one hundred* and *fourteen* Theological students, *one hundred* and *four* of whom were the children of pious mothers.

A student in the Seminary at Princeton states that "there are at present in that institution *one hundred* and *nine* young men prosecuting their studies with a view to the Christian ministry, and of this number *one hundred* and *two* are the children of pious mothers, and *seventy-seven* of them have pious fathers." How striking these facts! They show that the promise is to the *children* as well as to the parents; they show that God honors maternal piety; that he has a respect to the faith of pious parents, and that he encourages it, not merely by saving their children, but by elevating them to the highest earthly dignity, in making them his ambassadors to their dying fellow men.

LIFE FROM THE DEAD.

In most of the foregoing instances it will be noticed, that the fruits of religious instruction were early developed. Such, it is believed, will generally be the case, and pious parents ought to hope for, and expect it in reference to their own children. This will naturally exert a happy influence on the mode of their instructions. In some instances, however, God may long delay his blessing on the labors of the most faithful. But let them *never* despair. In due season they shall reap if they faint not.

It is said that in the hand of one of the mummies found in a pyramid, was discovered, a bulbous root, which being placed in the earth, grew and bloomed a beautiful, but unknown flower, after two thousand years. So may the good seed of the word of God spring up after many years. We have many examples in point. Some years since a venerable man, upwards of one hundred years old, was the subject of converting grace, in an eastern State. The immediate cause of his conversion was, hearing a text of Scripture which his pious mother had taught him in England, one hundred years before !

“ Though seed lie buried long in dust,
It shan't deceive our hope ;
The precious grain shall ne'er be lost,
For grace insures the crop.”

A pious mother, about sixty years since, had a prodigal son. He was about to leave her and go to sea. As a last resource, she placed a Bible in his chest, with a prayer to God for his blessing upon it. Year after year passed away, and nothing was heard of the wanderer. But the eye of his mother's God was upon him. A long time after, a clergyman was called to visit a dying sailor. He found him penitent and prepared to die. He had in his possession a Bible, which, he said was given him by a dying shipmate, who, expiring in the hope of the glory of God, gave it to him with his parting blessing. On the blank leaf was found written the name John Marshall, the above mentioned mother's prodigal son. This man was the brother of Mrs. Isabella Graham.

The particulars of the following incident are from a minister of the Gospel who has recently been laboring in Texas.

“ I observed, in one of my congregations, while in Texas, a young man who sat immedi-

ately opposite me, with an air of the most respectful and deep attention. His intelligent countenance and general deportment seemed to interest me, and in spite of his sun-burnt and weather-beaten cheek, bespoke a mind and character something more than ordinary. Being obliged to leave immediately, to meet another appointment, at the distance of twenty miles, early the next day, I did not get an opportunity of speaking to him, but I was surprised and gratified to find him in my congregation the next day, listening with the same deep and respectful attention, whilst I was endeavoring to unfold to lost sinners the way and plan of salvation. I now became so deeply interested in his case, that I sought an opportunity of speaking with him. His history was soon told. He was the only son of pious parents in Massachusetts. His mother especially had instilled into his mind, in early years, the lessons of virtue and religion. She had taught him to pray, and often prayed with him. But he grew up a wayward boy. He was educated at Middlebury College,—became an infidel—ridiculed religion—abjured all the pious lessons of his mother—studied law—and gave himself up to all manner of vice. His

heart-broken parents wept and prayed, but he plunged deeper and deeper into the depths of iniquity. At length, with a ruined character, and without any definite aim, farther than to avoid the sight of all former friends and acquaintances, which had become irksome, he started for Texas. There he joined a company going to Mexico. The second day, being poorly mounted, his horse gave out. He walked three days—became lame and sick. Being unable to proceed, he was left by his companions in the wide and lonely prairie to die. His thoughts now reverted to his home, and the image of his mother presented itself to his mind. Her pious admonitions and prayers, which he had wickedly determined never should benefit him, now returned to his memory, and the view he had of his awful wickedness drove him to despair. For the first time in a long series of years, he tried to pray.—But the moment he attempted it, his sins rose before him in such a light, that he felt it would be presumption. In this state of mind he passed the night, and felt that he would have gladly exchanged situations with one of the wild beasts whose mighty howl added bitterness to his lonely and wretched condition.

In the morning he felt better, and with the help of his horse, which he had led with him, and a little food left by his companions, he endeavored to find his way back to the settlement. With difficulty he reached a house on the frontier, and after a week's rest and care was restored to health. When I last saw him he was rejoicing in hope, and about to start home with the intention of preparing himself to preach the gospel. 'I have,' said he, 'written to my parents, to tell them the Prodigal has come to himself, and is about to return. They will hardly believe it till they see me. I hardly know how I shall meet them. I know they will rejoice and forgive me, but I cannot forgive myself.'"

Who can tell the feelings of that mother, when she would receive her son? But one thing we know: she would say to all mothers, be faithful, and hope in God.

The following fact was related by the late Rev. J. Griffin of Portsea, England.

A truly pious and excellent pair, who had conscientiously labored to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, set-

ting before them holy examples, and constantly committing them to God in earnest prayer for pardoning mercy and renewing grace, were exercised with the very heavy affliction of seeing two of their sons men of Belial in every sense. They threw off parental restraint, entirely forsook the habits of piety in which they had been trained, pursued vice and iniquity with greediness, and at length endeavored to stifle all the remonstrances of conscience which interrupted them in their sins, by persuading themselves that their parents' religion was all a dream and a delusion, and that there was no future life in which they could be called to account for the actions of this. Every means had been tried to arrest and reclaim the wretched wanderers at every step of their devious way. Parents had expostulated, and entreated, and wept, and prayed. Ministers and Christian friends had conversed or written, had reasoned, exhorted, and pleaded by every argument that might be expected to alarm or allure; so deeply was Christian sympathy excited for the afflicted parents, that many especial prayer meetings were held to implore that their aged hearts might yet be consoled by the return of their wretched prodi-

gals. But all these pious endeavors in their behalf only served as subjects of mockery to the wicked young men ; nothing seemed to awaken, nothing to melt their obdurate hearts.

At length the venerable father, almost broken-hearted on their account, sunk into threatening disease, attended also by mental depression bordering upon despondency. It was evident to all around that the shades of death were gathering around him ; and now his sons so far yielded to the dictates of natural affection, as frequently to watch beside his dying bed ; but they expressed no remorse for their past conduct, nor could any thing induce them to revisit the house of prayer, to read the Scriptures, or to be present at any act of devotion. Surrounding friends watched with trembling anxiety the effect that might be produced on their minds, by witnessing the death of a Christian ; and they fervently implored, perhaps in a spirit too much like that of dictation, that the end of the saint might be peaceful and triumphant, and that thus his erring children might be convinced of the truth and excellency of his religion ; but the gloom still prevailed, he feared that he had been deceiving himself and others, and eternity to him

was arrayed in all its terrors. Still prayer ascended, that some ray of heavenly light might burst upon his final hour, and dispel the gloom ere yet he entered upon the invisible glories of the heavenly world. But God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways. Isa. 55: 9. To the very last the good man was harassed with fearful apprehensions, and departed without one expression of consolation and joy. His ungodly sons were present. After their parent had expired, they sat by his bedside for more than an hour in silent horror, and were at length with difficulty prevailed upon to withdraw. They retired together, and having again sat a considerable time in profound silence, one of them thus addressed the other:—"Brother, if our father, who through life was so upright, holy and exemplary, endured all these terrors in the prospect of death and eternity, what will be endured by such wretches as you and myself?" The sentiment was reciprocal. Each was overwhelmed with the anguish of personal guilt and danger, and falling down together, they uttered their broken cries for mercy. The impression, happily, was not more deep than durable: from that hour they became earnest seekers of salva-

tion, humble, penitent, consistent servants of God, the joy and solace of their widowed mother's heart, the props and ornaments of the Church of God, in the place of him who through their crimes had gone down mourning to the grave, but whose heavenly bliss was doubtless enhanced by the joyful news of their conversion.

A clergyman of the city of Utica, N. Y. at a religious meeting, related the following anecdote, illustrative of the power of practical maternal faith. He was at the time, the seaman's chaplain, at a southern port. In the course of duty, he was called to the sick bed of a sailor, apparently at the gates of death from the effects of his licentiousness. He addressed him affectionately upon the state of his soul. With a curse, the sick man bid him begone, and not harass his dying bed. The chaplain, however, told him plainly he would speak, and he must hear, for his soul was in jeopardy of eternal death. The man, however, remained sullen and silent, and even pretended to sleep during his faithful address and prayer. Again and again the visit was repeated with similar ill success.

One day, however, the sick man made use of an expression, by which the chaplain suspected he was a Scotchman. To make sure of the fact, the chaplain repeated a verse of that version of the Psalms, still in use among the churches in Scotland :

Like pity as a father hath
Unto his children dear;
Such pity hath the Lord for those
Who worship him with fear.

The chords of his heart vibrated to the well-known language. His eyes glistened with unusual moisture. The chaplain preferred his advantage. Knowing the universality of religious instruction among the Scotch, he ventured an allusion to his mother. The poor prodigal burst into tears. He admitted himself to be the child of a praying mother, who had often commended him to God. He had left her long before, to become a wanderer on the face of the great deep. No longer did he repel the kind attentions of the chaplain; and his monitor had the satisfaction of seeing him arise from his bed, he verily believes, a child of God. It may be, the glorified spirit of his mother was one of the angels before the throne of God, who rejoiced over

his repentance; or if living, subsequently rejoiced over him that was dead, and is alive again—as lost, but found.

A clergyman, some time since, concluding a sermon to youth, took occasion to press upon parents the duty of parental faith, and illustrated its power in the following manner :

“ About two-and-twenty years ago, a little circle were met around the apparently dying couch of a male infant ; the man of God, who led their devotions, seemed to forget the sickness of the child, in his prayer for his future usefulness. He prayed for the child who had been consecrated to God at his birth, as a man, a Christian, and a minister of the Word. The parents had laid hold of the horns of the altar, and prayed with him. The child recovered, grew towards manhood, ran far in the ways of folly and sin. One after another of that little circle ascended to heaven ; but two at least, and one of them the mother, lived to hear him proclaim the everlasting gospel. It is,” said the preacher, “ no fiction; that child, that prodigal youth, that preacher, *is he who now addresses you.*”

The mother of Augustine presents an instructive case of perseverance in prayer for the conversion of a son. Augustine was an eminent divine, who died at Hippo, in Africa, in A. D. 480. Until he was thirty years of age, he was skeptical and immoral; yet his mother, the devoted Morrice, cherished an unshaken belief that he would become a Christian; and this expectation gave ardor and importunity to her prayers in his behalf. "For nine years," he says, "while I was rolling in the filth of sin, often attempting to rise, and still sinking deeper, did she, in vigorous hope, persist in incessant prayer." In connection with her prayers to God, she frequently and affectionately admonished him, and with weeping, entreated him to abandon his sins and devote himself to God. 'These tears made a deep impression on his heart. She went to a certain bishop in her agony, to get him to help her by his friendly counsels to her son. He put her off, and advised her to leave her son to his own course and the providence of God. But no: she persisted in her request with floods of tears; whereupon the bishop, a little disturbed by her importunity, said, "Begone, good woman, it is not possible that the child of such tears should perish."

Augustine, speaking of himself as he was in his unconverted state, full as he was, of a false philosophy, in his relation to his praying, weeping, agonized mother, says, "Thy hand, my God, in the secret of thy providence forsook not my soul; day and night the prayers of my mother came up before me, and thou wroughtest on me in a way marvellous indeed." "For nearly fourteen hundred years," says his biographer, "I trust Augustine has been in heaven, blessing and adoring God for his pious mother, and though deceased, he yet speaketh to all christian parents, to spare no pains for the conversion of their children, assured that they who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

FRIEND W., formerly Warden of the State Prison in —, was remarkably successful in his efforts to reclaim hardened villains. Many, when they were committed to his care, were like the man among the tombs, "possessed of a foul spirit;" but when they left, they were "in their right mind," and in the exercise of christian penitence and faith. Many entered *villains*, and by his influence, they went out *honest* men, and *continued* such through life. His first business,

when a convict was committed to prison, was to learn his character, his former course of life, and his crimes; and then, by acting towards him the part of a friend, to gain his confidence, and, by kindness and affection, to win back the wanderer to the path of virtue, honesty and happiness.

But in the spring of 18—, a convict was committed to his charge who baffled all his efforts. He was a young man, and evidently possessed of talents and intelligence.

Friend W. learned something of his history from the officer who committed him, and he felt deeply interested to reclaim him, if possible, from his vicious course. But the prisoner seemed resolved to maintain his proud and haughty bearing. He received every act of kindness with ingratitude and disdain. In vain did the warden attempt to gain his affection or his confidence. He would sometimes enter his cell, and read to him from the Bible. But the prisoner would turn his back towards him, and stop his ears. He would sometimes try to talk with him in accents of kindness and affection; but he could rarely get any more than the monosyllables, yes, and no, uttered in a harsh guttural tone, in reply. His three years of punishment

passed away, and he left the prison the same hardened, ungrateful villain that he was when he entered it. But a few months had elapsed, and he was again convicted of a crime and brought back, sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. Again did the pious and faithful warden renew his efforts, and try to awaken in the prisoner some virtuous emotion. But he seemed *dead* to all moral influence. He maintained the same obstinate, surly, sullen mood, as when in the prison before, and, if possible, seemed more morose and misanthropic than ever. Still, Friend W. was not entirely discouraged, and he resolved to make one more effort. With his Bible in his hand, he entered the prisoner's cell one evening, just after he had been released from his toil. He began to read the fifty-first Psalm. The prisoner turned his back as usual, and tried to seem indifferent to what he read. When the warden had done reading, he said, "Friend K. how old are thee?" After a sullen pause he replied surlily, "Thirty-five." "Thy parents are dead, are they not?" "Yes." "They died when thee was young?" "Yes." "Dost thou remember thy father?" "No." "Dost thou remember thy *mother*?" The prisoner paused—turned

his face towards the warden, and, in a softened and a tremulous voice, replied, "Yes I remember my mother." The warden saw that there was *one* chord of feeling still *alive*, that he had *then touched* that chord and it vibrated, and he continued,—“How old wast thee when thy mother died?” The prisoner raised his eyes, and looked the warden in the face; and the tear drops started as he replied, “I was eight years and five months old when she died.” The warden resumed—“Was thy mother a pious woman?” “O, yes—my mother was a Godly, pious woman, and she is now in heaven.” “Didst thou ever hear thy mother *pray*?” “Yes, she prayed every *night* and *morning*, and she taught me to kneel by her side and to pray also. O *that mother's prayers!*”

Here the prisoner gave vent to his feelings, and burst into tears. The pious Quaker wept also; they mingled their tears, and also their prayers. The prisoner seemed melted into contrition; he asked the warden's forgiveness and the forgiveness of his God. From that time he manifested an entire change in conduct and feeling. He seemed humble, submissive and penitent. After some months, the governor of the state was pe-

titioned, and the prisoner was released. He had become a new man. He removed to a distant part of the country, joined the church, and is now an honest man and a devoted Christian.

It is reported of a man, eminent for his talents, his elevated situation in life, and his dissipation, that one evening, while sitting at the gaming-table, he was observed to be unusually sad. His associates rallied him upon his serious aspect. He endeavored, by rousing himself, and by sallies of wit, which he had always at command, to turn away their attention, and throw off the transient gloom. Not many moments transpired before he seemed again lost in thought, and dejected, by some mournful contemplations. This exposed him so entirely to the ridicule of his companions, that he could not defend himself. As they poured in upon him their taunts and jeers, he at last remarked, "Well to tell the truth, I cannot help thinking, every now and then, of the prayers my mother used to offer for me at my bed-side when I was a child. Old as I am, I cannot forget the impressions of those early years." Here was a man of highly cultivated mind, and of so high

an order as to give him influence and eminence, notwithstanding his dissolute life, and yet neither lapse of years, nor acquisitions of knowledge, nor crowding cares, nor scenes of dissipation, could obliterate the effect which a mother's devotions had left upon his mind. The still small voice of a mother's prayers rose above the noise of guilty revelry. The pious mother, though dead, still continued to speak in impressive rebuke to her dissolute son.

A few years since, a gentleman from England brought a letter of introduction to a gentleman in this country. The stranger was of accomplished mind and manners, but in sentiment an infidel. The gentleman to whom he brought letters of introduction, and his lady, were active Christian philanthropists. They invited the stranger to make their house his home, and treated him with every possible attention. Upon the evening of his arrival, just before the usual hour for retiring, the gentleman, knowing the peculiarity of his guest's sentiments, observed to him that the hour had arrived in which they usually attended family prayers; that he should be happy to have him remain and unite with them, or,

if he preferred, he could retire. The gentleman intimated that it would give him pleasure to remain. A chapter of the Bible was read, and the family all knelt in prayer, the stranger with the rest. In a few days the stranger left this hospitable dwelling, and embarked on board a ship for a foreign land. In the course of three or four years, however, the providence of God again led that stranger to the same dwelling. But O how changed ! He came the happy Christian, the humble man of piety and prayer. In the course of the evening's conversation he remarked that when he, on the first evening of his previous visit, knelt with them in family prayer, it was the first time for many years that he had bowed the knee to his Maker. This act brought to his mind such a crowd of recollections, it so vividly reminded him of a parent's prayers which he had heard at home, that it completely absorbed his attention. His emotion was so great that he did not hear one syllable of the prayer which was uttered, from its commencement to its close. And God made this the instrument of leading him from the dreary wilds of infidelity to the peace and the joy of piety. His parents, I believe, had long before

gone home to their rest; but the prayers they had offered for and with their son, had left an influence which could not die.

Dr. Barrow, one of the most learned and eloquent English divines, on whom the critical Dr. Johnson pronounced the strongest verdict of praise, was in early life a most unpromising child. He seemed to have conceived an aversion for books, and became so addicted to idle and contentious company, that his father in bitterness of spirit exclaimed, "should it please God to take away any of my children, I pray him that it may be my son Isaac." His mother had long patience. She sustained herself on His strength, who has power to bring good out of evil. Parental care, and scholastic instruction were persevered in, and gained a great reward. As the son who was pronounced so hopeless, grew up, he evinced a temper which won all hearts, and made such progress in science, as to fill with honor, the mathematical chair, which Newton afterwards assumed. Among the most profound and universal scholars which his country could boast, he maintained the highest rank. *He was also distinguished as a powerful advo-*

cate of that religion, whose transforming influence he so eminently illustrated.

The excellent *Cecil*, whose writings are the wealth and solace of many a pious heart, was in early life, both unpromising and undutiful. "I was desperate, said he. I was determined to go on board a privateer. But I had a pious mother. She talked to me, and wept while she talked. There are soft moments, even to desperadoes. God does not all at once abandon them." One of the largest and most intelligent audiences in London, who were under his spiritual care, were once exceedingly moved to hear him exclaim from his pulpit, with surprising candor and humility, "as a public witness for God and for his truth, I must tell you that you should never despair. No distressed woman ever hoped more against hope, than the mother of your preacher. But she prayed, and waited patiently. She put her trust in an Omnipotent Arm. She not only prayed, but she instructed his mind, and then waited God's season. She lived long enough to hear that child preach the gospel, which he once despised. And she said, 'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.'"

REV. JOHN NEWTON.

The mother of Rev. John Newton was assiduous in her instructions, during the early period of his life. It was the only season allotted her for intercourse with him. When he was seven years old, death summoned her from his side. Faithfully had she labored to implant principles of piety. After he was withdrawn from her guidance, strong temptation beset him. He yielded, until he became exceedingly degraded. Many sorrows were his portion, ere his restitution to virtue.

When at length he became a faithful and laborious divine, he bore witness that the early precepts of his mother, had interposed between him and destruction. In a letter to Dr. Doddridge, he says, "To the care of my mother, I owe that bias towards religion, which with the co-operating grace of God, at length reclaimed, and brought me back to the paths of peace." Listen to him still more fully on this subject. "A prudent and pious woman in the capacity of wife and mother, is a greater character than any hero or philosopher, of either ancient, or modern times. The first impressions which children re-

ceive in the nursery, under the mother's immediate care, are seldom obliterated. Sooner or later, their influence conduces to form the future life. Though the child trained up in the way he should go, may for a season depart from it, there is always reason to hope that he will be found in it, when he is old. The principles instilled into the mind in infancy, may seem dormant for a while, but the prayers with which the mother watered what she planted there, are as some old writers say, 'upon the Lord's file.' Times of trouble recall these principles to the mind, and the child thus instructed, has something to recur to. *Thus it was with me.* I was the only son of my mother. She taught me. She prayed for me, and over me. Had she lived to see the misery and wickedness into which I afterwards plunged, I think it would have broken her heart. But in the Lord's time, her prayers were answered. Distress led me to recollect her early care. So was I led to look the right way for help. Happy and honored is the woman, who is thus qualified to instruct her children, and does it heartily, in the spirit of faith and prayer."

After the death of Newton's mother, he ac-

accompanied his father, who was a sea captain, on several voyages. He did not at first break away entirely from the restraints which his pious education imposed. The portions of Scripture, the catechisms, and hymns, which his godly mother had taught him in early life, he could not entirely forget. By degrees however he became even more wicked than any of his companions.

It may encourage some pious parents who now have profligate sons, to notice some, more particular confessions of Mr. Newton, in respect to the awful depths of guilt into which he was permitted to plunge, before his hopeful conversion.

The following is his own account of himself, relating to a time when he exchanged a certain ship in which he had embarked, for another.

“On board the Harwick, though my principles were totally corrupted, yet, as upon my first going there, I was in the same degree staid and serious, the remembrance of this made me ashamed of breaking out in the notorious manner I could otherwise have indulged. But now, entering amongst strangers, I could appear without disguise; and I well remember, that while I was passing from the one ship to the other, this was one reason why I rejoiced in the exchange,

and one reflection I made upon the occasion, viz. ‘That I now might be as abandoned as I pleased, without any control;’ and from this time I was exceedingly vile indeed, little if any thing short of that animated description of an almost irrevocable state, which we have in 2 Pet. 2: 14. I not only sinned with a high hand myself, but made it my study to tempt and seduce others upon every occasion; nay, I eagerly sought occasion, sometimes to my hazard and hurt.

“I shall say no more of this part of my story; let it be buried in eternal silence. But let me not be silent from the praise of that grace which could pardon, that blood which could expiate such sins as mine.”

He was afterwards a passenger on board another ship, which was on a trading voyage off the coast of Africa. At this time he says: “I had no business to employ my thoughts, but sometimes amused myself with mathematics: excepting this, my whole life, when awake, was a course of most horrid impiety and profaneness. I know not that I have ever since met so daring a blasphemer. Not content with common oaths and imprecations,

I daily invented new ones ; so that I was often seriously reprov'd by the captain, who was himself a very passionate man and not at all circumspect in his expressions. From the relation I at times made him of my past adventures, and what he saw of my conduct, and especially towards the close of the voyage, when we met with many disasters, he would often tell me, that to his great grief, he had a Jonah on board ; that a curse attended me wherever I went ; and that all the troubles he met with in the voyage were owing to his having taken me into the vessel.

“ Sometimes I would promote drinking for a frolic's sake, as I termed it ; for though I did not love the liquor, I was sold to do iniquity, and delighted in mischief. The last wicked scene of this sort I engaged in was in the river Gabon ; the proposal and expense were my own. Four or five of us one evening sat down upon deck to see who could hold out longest in drinking geneva and rum alternately ; a large sea-shell supplied the place of a glass. I was very unfit for a challenge of this sort ; for my head was always incapable of bearing much strong drink. However, I began, and proposed the

first toast, which I well remember was some imprecation against the person who should *start* first. This proved to be myself. My brain was soon fired. I arose, and danced about the deck like a mad man; and while I was thus diverting my companions, my hat went overboard. By the light of the moon I saw the ship's boat, and eagerly threw myself over the side to get into her, that I might recover my hat. My sight in that circumstance deceived me; for the boat was not within my reach, as I thought, but perhaps, twenty feet from the ship's side. I was however, half overboard, and should in one moment more have plunged myself into the water, when somebody caught hold of my clothes behind, and pulled me back. This was an amazing escape; for I could not swim if I had been sober: the tide ran very strong; my companions were too much intoxicated to save me; and the rest of the ship's company were asleep. So near was I to appearance of perishing in that dreadful condition, and sinking into eternity under the weight of my own curse.

“This deliverance and many others were all at that time entirely lost upon me. The admonitions of conscience, which, from successive re-

pulses, had grown weaker, at length ceased ; and for a space of many months, if not for some years, I cannot recollect that I had a single check of that sort. At times I had been visited with sickness, and have believed myself near to death : but I had not the least concern about the consequences. In a word, I seemed to have every mark of final impenitence and rejection ; neither judgments nor mercies made the least impression upon me."

But notwithstanding the awful wickedness of Newton, it was the Lord's will that he should be reclaimed and become a successful preacher of that faith which he had labored to destroy. The prayers and tears and teachings of his pious mother were never intended to be in vain. God had put it into the heart of that mother to labor and pray for her child, and from the beginning he had determined to make her, through her son, an invaluable blessing to the world. And it would seem as if to make it appear that this *was* his design, he often interposed in the most remarkable manner to save the life of Newton, even while he was pursuing his career of folly and guilt, and sometimes also after his hopeful conversion.

A few instances of this kind will be noticed. During the same voyage in which he so narrowly escaped from a watery grave while in a state of intoxication, were it not for the most signal interposition of Divine Providence, he would have been shipwrecked.

“One night,” he says, “I was awakened from a sound sleep by the force of a violent sea, which broke on board us. So much of it came down below as filled the cabin I lay in with water. This alarm was followed by a cry from the deck, that the ship was going down, or sinking. As soon as I could recover myself, I essayed to go upon deck; but was met upon the ladder by the captain, who desired me to bring a knife with me. While I returned for the knife another person went up in my room, who was instantly washed overboard. We had no leisure to lament him: nor did we expect to survive him long; for we soon found the ship was filling with water very fast. The sea had torn away the upper timbers on one side, and made the ship a mere wreck in a few minutes. Taking in all circumstances, it was astonishing, and almost miraculous, that any of us survived to relate the story. We had immediate recourse

to the pumps; but the water increased against all our efforts; some of us were set to *bailing* in another part of the vessel, that is, to lade it out with buckets and pails. We had but eleven or twelve people to sustain this service; and notwithstanding all we could do, she was full or very near it; and then with a common cargo, she must have sunk of course; but we had a great quantity of bees'-wax and wood on board, which were specifically lighter than the water; and, as it pleased God that we received this shock in the very crisis of the gale, towards morning we were enabled to employ some means for our safety, which succeeded beyond hope. In about an hour's time the day began to break, and the wind abated. We expended most of our clothes and bedding to stop the leaks; (though the weather was exceeding cold; especially to us, who had so lately left a hot climate;) over these we nailed pieces of boards, and at last perceived the water abate. At the beginning of this hurry I was little affected. I pumped hard, and endeavored to animate myself and my companions. I told one of them, that in a few days this distress would serve us to talk over a glass of wine: but he being a less

hardened sinner than myself, replied with tears "No, it is too late now." About nine o'clock, being almost spent with cold and labor, I went to speak with the captain, who was busied elsewhere; and just as I was returning from him, I said, almost without any meaning, "If this will not do, the Lord have mercy on us." This, (though spoken with little reflection) was the first desire I had breathed for mercy for the space of many years. I was instantly struck with my own words, and as Jehu said once, *What hast thou to do with peace?* so it directly occurred, *What mercy can there be for me?* I was obliged to return to the pump, and there I continued till noon, almost every passing wave breaking over my head; but we made ourselves fast with ropes, that we might not be washed away. Indeed, I expected that every time the vessel descended in the sea, she would rise no more, and though I dreaded death *now*, and my heart foreboded the worst, if the Scriptures, which I had long since opposed, were indeed true; still I was but half-convinced, and remained for a space of time in a sullen frame, a mixture of desire and impatience.

"I continued at the pump from *three* in the

morning till near *noon*, and then I could do no more. I went and lay down upon my bed, uncertain, and almost indifferent, whether I should rise again. In an hour's time I was called; and not being able to pump, I went to the helm, and steered the ship till midnight, excepting a small interval for refreshment. * * * *

“Provisions now began to grow very short; the half of a salted cod was a day's subsistence for twelve people. We had plenty of fresh water, but not a drop of strong liquor: no bread, hardly any clothes, and very cold weather. We had incessant labor with the pumps to keep the ship above water. Much labor and little food wasted us fast, and one man died under the hardship. Yet our sufferings were light in comparison of our just fears. We could not afford this bare allowance much longer, but had a terrible prospect of being either starved to death, or reduced to feed upon one another. Our expectations grew darker every day, and I had a further trouble peculiar to myself. The captain, whose temper was quite soured by distress, was hourly reproaching me (as I formerly observed) as the sole cause of the calamity; and was confident, that if I was thrown overboard,

and not otherwise, they should be preserved from death. He did not intend to make the experiment; but the continual repetition of this in my ears gave me much uneasiness, especially as my conscience seconded his words; I thought it very probable that all that had befallen us was on my account. I was at last found out by the powerful hand of God, and condemned in my own breast. However, I began to conceive hopes greater than all my fears; especially when at the time we were ready to give up all for lost, and despair was taking place in every countenance, I saw the wind coming about to the point we wished it, so as best to suit that broken part of the ship which must be kept out of the water, and to blow as gently as our few remaining sails could bear; and thus it continued, without any observable alteration or increase, though at an unsettled time of the year, till we were called up to see the land, and were convinced that it was land indeed. We saw the island Tory, and next day anchored in Lough Swilly, Ireland. This was the 8th of April, just four weeks after the damage we sustained from the sea. When we came into this port our very last victuals were boiling in the pot; and be-

fore we had been there two hours, the wind which seemed to have been providentially restrained till we were in a place of safety, began to blow with great violence ; so that, if we had continued at sea that night in our shattered, enfeebled condition, we must, in all human appearance, have gone to the bottom. About this time I began to know that there is a God that hears and answers prayer."

Other remarkable interpositions of Providence in his behalf occurred when he was on a voyage for the purchase of slaves in Africa. The following is one among other instances which he has himself related. "When our trade was finished, and we were near sailing to the West Indies, the only remaining service I had to perform in the boat was to assist in bringing the wood and the water from the shore. We were then at Rio Cestors. I used to go into the river in the afternoon with the sea-breeze, procure my loading in the evening, and return on board in the morning, with the land wind. Several of these little voyages I had made ; but the boat was grown old, and almost unfit for use. This service likewise was almost completed. One day, having dined on board, I was preparing to

return to the river as formerly : I had taken leave of the captain, received his orders, was already in the boat, and just going to put off, as we term it ; that is, to let go our ropes, and sail from the ship. In that instant the captain came up from the cabin and called me on board again. I went, expecting further orders ; but he said, he had *took it in his head* (as he phrased it) that I should remain that day in the ship ; and accordingly ordered another man to go in my room. I was surprised at this, as the boat had never been sent away without me before, and asked him the reason : he could give me no reason but as above, that so he would have it. Accordingly the boat went without me, but returned no more : she sunk that night in the river, and the person who had supplied my place was drowned. I was much struck when we received news of the event the next morning. The captain himself, though quite a stranger to religion, so far as to deny a particular providence, could not help being affected ; but he declared, that he had no other reason for countermanding me at that time, but that it came suddenly into his mind to detain me."

Another remarkable preservation occurred

some years after he was hopefully converted. A generous friend of his had procured him the place of tide surveyor, in the port of Liverpool. After his conversion, Mr. Newton was very punctual in observing his engagements, and was even seen sitting with his watch in his hand, lest he should fail of keeping his next appointment. "This exactness with respect to time, was his habit, while occupying his post at Liverpool. One day, however, some business had so detained him that he came to his boat much later than usual, to the surprise of those who had observed his former punctuality. He went out in the boat, as heretofore, to inspect a ship, but the vessel blew up just before he reached her. It appears that if he had left the shore a few minutes sooner, he must have perished with the rest on board."

Who can fail to recognize in these instances the hand of that God who has promised to hear and answer prayer?

"The first desire of Mr. Newton for the Christian ministry, arose from a reflection on Gal. 1: 23, 24, 'But they heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed, and they

glorified God in me.' He could not but wish for such a public opportunity to testify the riches of divine grace. He thought, as he says, he was above most living, a fit person to proclaim that faithful saying, That Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners; and as his life had been full of remarkable events, and he seemed selected to show what the Lord could do, he was in some hopes, that perhaps sooner or later, God might call him into his service."

At length after experiencing many difficulties he entered the ministry, and for a long course of years discharged his official duties with the *greatest fidelity* and *success*. Among others to whom his labors were blessed, may be mentioned the Poet Cowper, the Missionary Buchanan, and the Commentator Scott. And now through the instrumentality of the writings of these men, the sainted mother of Newton is blessing the world, and doubtless will continue to bless it until the end of time.

CONCLUSION.

The foregoing facts are but specimens of thousands which might be given, illustrating the happy influence of faithful parental instruction and discipline. The counterpart of this subject is not here presented, and indeed it never can be *known* until the final day, when every influence, good and bad, will be traced to its true source. But the view of the subject here given, while it should encourage pious and faithful parents, and excite them to still greater fidelity in training up their children for God, should cause others to tremble lest the blood of their children's souls, be at last found in their skirts. For here the truth is abundantly taught, thrilling as it is, that parents hold in their hands the *eternal destiny* of their children.

By this however, as another very appropriately observes, is not meant "that parents can, by any direct agency of their own, renew the hearts of their children. This must be done, if it ever is done, by the agency of the Holy Spirit. But it is meant, that, when you become parents, your children are committed to your care, to be trained up for their final destiny; and that according

to the means which you shall use, their character will be ordinarily determined, and their final destiny fixed. It is according to the ordinary laws of cause and effect, as proved by experience and observation, that your children shall be what you train them to be; and that their character will secure its decisive stamp, from your care and attention, or take its distinctive features in a different way, from your remissness and neglect."

And now in view of this truth, so plainly taught in the word of God, and confirmed by *facts*, will not those parents who read these pages, enquire of themselves, what is the influence they are at present exerting upon their children? Is it such an influence as will fit them for *Heaven* or for *Hell*? O Parents! Parents! consider this question; in view of the *immortality* of your children consider it. And if you are convinced that your influence is what it ought not to be, may you have grace speedily to reform your lives, lest ere you are aware, you eternally destroy those souls, which God has given you to train for glory.









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